

WIT'S LAST STAKE,

King (D.)

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E.

As it is performed

At the THEATRE ROYAL,

DRURY LANE.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXIX.

[Price One Shilling.]

LE LEGATAIRE UNIVERSEL,
A French Comedy, which furnished many Materials
for this little Piece, may be found among the
Works of *Monsieur Regnard.*



THIS DRAMATIC TRIFLE
IS
MOST HUMBLY AND GRATEFULLY
PRESENTED
TO
THE INDULGENT PUBLIC,
AS A SMALL TRIBUTE
FOR
THE MANY UNDESERVED FAVORS
CONFERRED ON
THEIR MOST OBEDIENT,
RESPECTFUL
AND EVER OBLIGED
SERVANT,
THOMAS KING.

Dramatis Personæ.

Linger,
Saville,
Martin,
Caveat, } Two proctors,
Item, }
Boy,

Mr. PARSONS.
Mr. CAUTHERLY.
Mr. KING.
Mr. HARTRY.
Mr. WRIGHT.
Master CAPE.

Mrs. Watchly,
Myra,
Lucetta,



Mrs. JOHNSON.
Miss PLATT.
Miss POPE.

WIT'S LAST STAKE.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

MARTIN *and* LUCETTA *meeting.*

L u c.

MR. Martin, good morning! you are abroad very early. Have you alter'd your hour of rising, or are you troubled with a bad conscience?

Mart. I make you as early a visit as this is, my dear girl, each morning of my life—in imagination;—but I now pay my duty to you in person, and by order of my master. He, poor soul! full of anxiety, bad me attend your levée for an account of the health of that sweet swain his uncle, How has he passed the night?

Luc. Never worse.

Mart. Heav'n be praised! The old fellow must have had a noble constitution, or he never could have stood buff at once to so many diseases.

Luc. Very true. He has twice within these two days fallen into my arms in a profound lethargy:
B and,

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and, I believe, no earthly care but mine could have revived him.

Mart. O curse your care ! And pray how are you rewarded ?

Luc. Why, I can't say I have either present pay, or good quarters. He seems sensible of my good offices ; but begs to be excused the paying for them.—He, indeed, promises faithfully to remember me in his Will.

Mart. What, is he going to make one at last ?

Luc. Immediately—where my name, I believe, will make no small figure.

Mart. Heav'n send it, say I !—the old fellow must be very rich.

Luc. Rich ! so he had need be to satisfy all those who are gaping for his death.

Mart. He'll treat them with a mouthful of moonshine. My master flatters himself the best part of the wealth will fall to his lot. I think, I, as a relation, am entitled to a legacy.

Luc. A relation ! You !

Mart. Yes I—My master and his uncle are relations, that can't be deny'd.—My late wife was as obliging as she was handsome—indeed we were look'd on as the most agreeable couple in the parish—but let that pass. She, I say, by a small exertion of that good nature for which she was remarkable, took care that my master and I should be kin. O, I'm certainly one of the family.—

Luc. At that rate, I believe, you are related to more families than this. O wedlock would be a wealthy state indeed if husbands could inherit by such a title.

Mart. True, true—but joking apart—'tis necessary that we should do every thing in our power to forward this will, get it made, and to our
liking

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liking too—for if my master should not be remembered by the old gentleman, he must, the rest of his days, take up with very spare diet. But what is most materially to be considered, is the reward of five hundred, which he has promised to give you and me, as secret service money, on the day of his marriage with Myra: and which, to avoid disputes concerning dividends, you have consented shall be common stock, and we are to follow their example. O, here comes my master.—

Enter SAVILLE.

Sav. Well, my dear Lucetta, what news? afford me some comfort! How is my poor uncle? How has he passed the night? Can he bear company? May I be permitted to see him this morning?

Luc. Really, Sir, he has passed the night very ill; and, if I can form any judgment, he has not a right to expect many more on this side the grave.

Sav. Good heav'n! What say you, Lucetta? Notwithstanding my great expectations, duty and nature are very powerful in me; and his approaching end causes certain emotions, which you cannot feel, or I describe.

Mart. I cannot answer for her feelings, or your descriptions; but as to emotions, I believe they are such as I felt when I paid the last duties to my poor dear wife of pious memory. I found myself attacked by a kind of a certain sort of a—slow—pungent—pleasing—melancholy—that had such an effect on my spirits, that—as if—in short, as you say, Sir, it is a situation easier felt than told, and what many a married man wishes to experi-

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ence, that he may become a more competent judge.

Luc. —I believe the old gentleman begins to think himself in a bad way at last; for he has ordered me to provide two proctors.

Sav. My heart throbs to find my fate so near its crisis.

Luc. Be of good cheer, Sir; I believe all will go well: within these two days he and your mistress's mother, Mrs. Watchly, were laying their heads together, and in deep muttering for some time—Deeds—legacies—marriages, and so forth; and I make no doubt the main point was making a conditional match for you and the young lady.

Sav. Don't flatter me, Lucetta. Heaven is my witness, I should not think wealth worth a wish, did it not shorten the journey of my desires to my dear Myra.

Luc. Come, come, Sir, you are in a fair way of having both—Nay, I make no doubt of your being sole heir.—Troth 'twould grieve me to see the stock divided: for, Sir, I know you would do a world of good with it.—Now, as to your promise to Martin and me, I know—

Sav. Say no more of that, Lucetta: I remember my promise, and will be even better than my word.

Luc. O, Sir, I don't doubt your generosity: and I hope I may venture to say, I shall not be altogether unworthy. I have always kept praising you and your good qualities to the old gentleman.—Lord, Sir, says I, how happy are you in such a nephew! so sweet a disposition! so complaisant! so respectful! not urged to attend you, like most of your relations, from a principle of selfishness, but by a regard of the most delicate and tender nature.

Mart.

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Mart. You hear, Sir, how well she knows and describes you—to say the truth, Sir, I think you can no more over-rate *her* merit, than she can over-praise *yours*.

Sav. I think her desert is great—and I'll tell you what else I think—

Mart. What, Sir?

Sav. That you are not quite disinterested in your recommendation.

Mart. Why the truth is, Sir, the poor girl has cast a favourable eye on the person and good qualities of your humble servant, and I have consented to follow your example. I'm sure, Sir, you can't blame me for taking pity on her.

Luc. Pity, Sauce-box! pity!

Mart. O, that dissembled anger becomes you mightily. You see, Sir, she has her attractions; she's young, handsome, *en bon point*; and—I had better not be too lavish neither, lest he shou'd take a fancy to her too.

Luc. Hush! I hear the old gentleman. You have detain'd me so long here, I shan't be able to go to the Proctors. Run you, Martin, directly, and tell them to come hither; they both live in Doctor's Commons; one is named Caveat, the other Item.—go.—

Mart. I fly.

[*Exit.*

Enter LINGER.

Ling. Ah, Nephew! good-morrow!

Sav. Dear Sir, how do you find yourself? sit down, Sir—Lucetta, draw forward the arm-chair, that my uncle may be more at his ease.

Ling. So—so—so— (*sits down*)

Sav.

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Sav. I think, Sir, you look much better than when I saw you last—But, Sir, I really think you don't do yourself justice ; your frame must be much weaken'd by your disorder, and you neglect the proper applications to restore it.

Ling. They are not to be had, nephew, without a considerable expence. Those props for the constitution are very dear ; and I think the building so crazy, 'tis hardly worth repairing—But, dear Charles, I'm glad you call'd ; for I have some thoughts of settling my small worldly matters—Have you sent for the Proctors ?

(to *Lucetta*)

Luc. Yes, Sir ; and expect them here very soon.

Ling. My good Charles, I shall take care of thee.

Sav. I have no cause to doubt it, Sir.

Ling. You know that I have relations, that—
euh, euh— (coughs)

Luc. Yes, in troth, a hopeful pack, and a comfortable number.

Ling. Who watch my door as eagerly as the undertaker.

Sav. I hope my uncle knows me too well to put me in the list.

Luc. Heaven be praised ! I shall see the harpies fitted for their avarice. Such a crew ! hungry as wolves, and cunning as foxes. O, what raising of shoulders, and dropping of jaws there will be, whenever the will's produc'd, and the long expected ticket proves a blank. Never stir, Sir, but I think it wou'd be worth a trip from the other world to behold their disappointment.

Ling. May be so, *Lucetta*—But as I am not got there yet, I need not at present think about making the experiment. However I'll put my
affairs

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affairs in order, and have sent for the Proctors to take my instructions.

Luc. Sir, you act as a prudent man ought—

Ling. Nephew, you have now and then seen our neighbour, Mrs. Watchly?

Sav. Yes, Sir.

Ling. And her daughter, Myra,—*guh, guh*—you have seen her too?

Sav. Yes, Sir; and have been much pleas'd with her ease, affability, and amiable manners.

Ling. Very amiable! I am glad, Charles, we think so near alike—for—I am going to marry her.

Sav. You, uncle!

Ling. I, nephew.

Sav. I wish you happy—Heaven's what a turn! But I must dissemble. (*aside*)

Luc. O, phials and crutches, marry!—you marry Miss Myra?—you, Sir—

Ling. Ay, why not, Sir?

Luc. My stars!—you;—what you marry? so old, so feeble, so, so, so, every thing—is that proper?

Ling. No prating, hussy! I best know my own concerns, and what is proper for me; so pray keep your impertinent remarks to yourself—old and feeble quotha!

Enter a Servant Boy.

Boy. Sir, Mrs. Watchly and Miss Myra are below.

Ling. Nephew, do you conduct them up.

Sav. I will, Sir—(*aside*) what a task have I to go through?

[*Exeunt Saville and Boy.*]

Ling.

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Ling. Here, Lucetta ! my wig quickly (*she puts it on*)—there, there, settle my neckcloth—so, how do I look, Lucetta—Eh ?

Luc. Enchantingly—If you were my husband, I would not desire you to look better.

Ling. D'ye hear ! not a word of my lethargy.

Luc. Mighty well.

Ling. Nor of my age, Mrs. Flippant.

Luc. If I can hold my tongue, I will, Sir ; but 'tis rather upon the gallop to-day.

*Enter SAVILLE, Mrs. WATCHLY,
and MYRA.*

Mrs. Wat. Mr. Linger, your most obedient. How are you, Sir ? I did not expect, after what I heard this morning, to find you so well. We were alarmed with a report that you had had a bad night, and were given over.

Ling. Oh, Madam, those reports are spread by my vile relations, who speak as they wish.—I was never better.

Sav. I think, Madam, my uncle's countenance is a confirmation of it : he really looks like a man of thirty.

Luc. (*Aside*) Yes, in a coffin.

Ling. My case must be desperate indeed, if those bright eyes could not work a cure. Euh, euh ! (*coughs*) (*looking at Myra.*)

Mrs. Wat. You see, my dear Myra, the man I have fix'd on as your future husband ; and I am convinced you are too well acquainted with your duty, to dispute my pleasure.

Myra. It is true, Madam, my duty urges a consent ; but believe me, my compliance can answer no other end than to convince the gentleman of

his mistake, and make me unhappy.—He will find, upon a short trial; my eyes will not have the wonderful effect his present partiality ascribes to them.

Sav. That, Madam, must be according as they are applied. I dare say, when rightly used, they have a very healing quality.

Ling. Ah, well said, Charles! I believe I shall prove the truth of what you say; and in a few months give occasion for a report that will not be so pleasing to my hungry relations—as—Euh, euh! (*coughs.*)

Luc. (*To Myra*) Lord, Madam, how melancholy you look! you don't seem in the least to be sensible of your felicity—why, you'll be the envy of your sex—Pin-money for the present! a fine jointure in future! a charming equipage! a handsome man! a parcel of sweet babes! and the curses of all your husband's relations—I know no happiness like it.

Ling. Thank you, Lucetta, thank you!

Myra. I can't bear this impertinence. Why, Sir, (*to Linger*) they are laughing both at you and me.—

Ling. Laughing at us!—who is it, my sweet Myra, that dares to laugh at us? What, is it you, nephew?—

Sav. Heaven forbid, Sir—I was never more serious than I am at present. Were I in your place I would do just the same. Warm passions require a wife, and a good estate wants an heir; the young lady's mother gives her consent, and I would marry the sweet, young, amiable creature directly.—

(*looking tenderly at Myra*)

Ling. You mean me, nephew?

Sav. To be sure, Sir.—

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Myra. Is it then your advice, Sir, that I obey my mother's commands?

Sav. (Aside) 'Sdeath, what shall I say—O, hypocrisy!—

Myra. Sir!

Sav. Madam, duty would speak should I be silent.

Myra. I say no more, Sir; you have proved your duty by pleading for your uncle and advising me. I, for my part, Madam, shall prove mine by an immediate compliance with your will whenever called upon. *[Exit in haste.]*

Sav. (Aside to Lucetta) For heaven's sake, Lucetta, follow her down and explain matters. You see my miserable situation—but I'll forfeit every hope rather than suffer her to entertain suspicions of my fidelity.

Luc. So, so—here will be fine work.—

[Exit Lucetta.]

Mrs. Wat. You see, Sir, it is as I told you; my daughter yields to me in all things: and when I have transferred my right, I dare say she will as cheerfully submit to yours.

Sav. O, Madam, there is not the least ground for doubt.

Mrs. Wat. I will immediately follow Myra, and have no doubt of settling every thing to your wish; you shall hear from me by to-morrow morning. In the mean time you may proceed in regard to the writings.—

Ling. I shall think every moment an age.—Dear Madam, yours. *[Exit Mrs. Watchly.]*

Ling. A very discreet, well-bred, discerning woman, indeed.—But I have really so exhausted my strength and spirits on this occasion, that I want recruiting.—Euh—Euh—

Sav.

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Sav. You had better lie down a little, Sir. Come, I'll raise you and wait on you in.—

Ling. O, no, here comes Lucetta, and I'll not trouble you.

Enter LUCETTA.

Ling. Charles, fare thee well awhile—I'll send to thee when I've had a little rest; if I can take any till I hear from my dear Myra—Euh, 'euh—Time will move but slowly till I have reached the end of all my wishes.—

Sav. I shall be ready to attend you, Sir;—and that I may be ready I shall wait within call.—

(Aside.) *[Exit,*

Ling. I vow, Lucetta, the tumult my heart has been in, at the thoughts of possessing that sweet young creature, has quite overpowered me—I am afraid my passion has gone too far, and has undertaken more than my strength can support.—Lead me to my bed—I shall faint, Lucetta, before I get to my chamber.—What a perverse, envious disorder this is, that will not let me reap the harvest of love, without putting me in mind of mortality.—Euh—Euh—Sick—Sick—very sick, indeed!—

Luc. What a compleat husband is here for a girl of two and twenty—Lord help his poor head!
(Leads him off.)

Enter SAVILLE, peeping.

“Time will move but slowly till he has reached the end of all his wishes!”—He moves so slowly that I should rather think he'll sooner reach the end of all his cares another way—A pleasant situation this

of mine ! Was ever poor devil betrayed into such a scene of complicated hypocrisy ? What violence have I done myself these few last minutes ! and for what ? The old lady, I know is pretty positive—She does not give her daughter to the man but to the fortune ; and I seem to stand a worse chance for that than ever—Then what hope have I ? None—but in the chapter of accidents, which as often befriends poor young fellows, as poor politicians.—

Enter MARTIN.

Well, Martin, what have you been doing ?

Mart. Tiring my legs, and breaking my wind, by running to and again—after your business—I have at last got to the speech of the proctors—and they have promised to be here in less than an hour.

Sav. Mighty well. But can you guess how my uncle intends to employ them when they arrive ?

Mart. Yes, to make his will ; and, by so doing, to fulfil ours.

Sav. What do you think of making a marriage contract ?

Mart. No, sure ! who, in the name of cuckoldom, is to be the happy woman ?

Sav. No other than my own dear Myra. What do you think of that ?

Mart. Why, I think, if the wedding takes place, Mrs. Watchly will be a cruel avaritious jezebel ; that e'er long the old man will be heartily tir'd, and Miss heartily mortified—that you will run distracted ; these put together will make up a bad piece of news for your creditors, and I shall run away, which I may say without vanity, Sir, will be a very severe stroke upon you.

Sav.

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Sav. Sir, your servant. I wish they may bear their loss with half the patience that I shall mine.

Enter LUCETTA.

Sav. Well, Lucetta, what news?

Luc. The best in the world. I think your uncle grows worse and worse; and his wishes for the match seem to give way with his health. I did as you desired with Miss Myra.—I am convinced all the old lady's rhetoric will be thrown away—this I have told the old gentleman, not omitting a few aggravating circumstances which invention supplied me with, and he as good as says he has no hopes.—Now if we can but— (*bell rings*) Hark, his bell rings—I'll go to him, and make the best use of my time, ay, and my tongue too—Courage, Sir, we shall come through at last never fear. (*bell rings.*) So, so, so. [*Exit Lucetta.*]

Mart. Huzza! things begin to look as they should do. Farewel expectation and welcome regular meals. Ah, my dear Sir, we shall yet be made men. Exit penury, enter generosity. The cash will tumble into proper hands—consent will follow cash, and matrimony follow consent. My good fortune depends on your marriage, and my marriage on your good fortune. You will—

Sav. Hold, hold! not quite so fast! you seem to be reckoning without your host. I will, however, run and acquaint my dear Myra with the present posture of affairs, and try what I can do with the old lady.—Do you stay in the way to usher in the proctors; and if any thing extraordinary happens, you know where to find me. (*going.*)

Enter LUCETTA.

O heav'ns! the most unfortunate accident!—O, worthy Sir, you are undone—Martin's wretched, and I am miserable.—

Sav. What's the matter, Lucetta? has my uncle changed his resolution? don't keep me in suspense.—

Luc. O, dear Sir, our hopes are all vanished—your uncle's dead.

Sav. Dead, Lucetta!

Luc. Dead, Sir. The moment I got into his room, I saw every token of life forsaking him—he just muttered something, that he wished for the proctors, that he would now leave you sole heir. O, what a time to be taken off! sole heir, Sir, only think of that! so—so—so—sole heir! O—o—o— (*crying.*)

Sav. Then fate has done its worst.

Mart. Come, come, this is no time for reflection—the holes made by fate, we must patch up with industry—self preservation is the first law of nature. Secure all the old gentleman's moveables before his death is made public. You have equity on your side; for you know in your conscience, nay she, you find, absolutely heard him declare, he intended to make you his heir.

Sav. I am thunderstruck! I know not how to turn!

Enter Servant Boy.

Boy. Sir, Mr. Item, and Mr. Caveat, the proctors from Doctors Commons, are below.

Luc. Shew them into the parlour.—(*Exit Serv.*) Now, Sir, determine quickly as to your conduct in this affair—Your uncle's death must be immediately

diately known.—Stay—I have a thought.—Suppose we darken the room as much as will serve our purpose, put your uncle's cap, one of his old gowns and so forth on Martin; throw him on the settee, and then let him, as your uncle, dictate the heads of a will, which can never be disputed, and consequently put you in possession of all your present wishes.

Sav. What say you, Martin, to this expedient?

Mart. Say! That I am ready to march whenever you give the word of command. Our temptations are woman and gold, so far we are even—but as you are commander and I only a common soldier, I must run into the thick of the danger, while you are little more than an humble spectator.—But—produce the materials, and advance proctors!—

Luc. Follow me to the proper apartment, and I'll equip you.— [Exeunt.

SCENE *changes to another Apartment.*

Enter Boy, shewing in ITEM and CAVEAT.

Boy. Please to walk in, gentlemen—my master will see you presently.

Item. Very well. (*Exit Boy.*) Pray, Brother Caveat, is there likely to be an accommodation in that affair between Lord Doublematch and the relations of Miss Underage?

Caveat. I can't say—My Lord has a great deal of understanding and but little money; the lady's friends a great deal of money, and a very small share either of right or understanding—so—but as I have told you the situation of both parties, I dare say, Brother Item, we may both guess how it will end.

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Enter SAVILLE.

Sav. Gentlemen, your most obedient—

Item. Sir yours—pray how is good Mr. Linger?

Sav. Why, Sir, in a very disagreeable situation, and I fear near his end.—When he sent to you we had very little expectation of his living till you came—but he has taken a little nap since, and seems tolerably refresh'd. He is preparing to receive you.

Caveat. See, Sir, how contrary to his intentions things might have ended.—A man who has any thing to leave, should not defer settling his affairs till the last moment. Some idle people will tell you, that a man may often change his mind as to the disposal of his property. So let him, so let him—he can also change the form of his will as often; and might I advise, a man of fortune should rather make ten wills a month, than live a month after he's of age without one.

Sav. Sir, my uncle, without hearing your opinion seems conscious of his error, and wants to do all in his power to prevent the inconveniencies you seem to apprehend from his neglect. He is wholly unable to bear much light or talk—therefore I must beg you will put up with as little of one, and provoke as little of the other, as the nature of the case will admit. Come, gentlemen, I'll shew you the way.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene draws and discovers Martin (as Linger) on a couch, Lucetta waiting.

Enter SAVILLE, ITEM, and CAVEAT.

Mart. Gentlemen, I'm glad you are here and in health; I really don't envy you, though I can-
not

not help wishing that I had as good a stock, that making a will might not be so immediately necessary.

Caveat. Courage, my good Sir; a man is not a bit nearer death for making his will; nay, I affirm the very contrary.—Nothing so likely to give repose as easing the mind; nothing so likely to ease the mind, as settling one's worldly affairs; nothing so absolute a settlement of worldly affairs as a well made will—ergo—a well made will is the likeliest medicine to re-establish health.—

Mart. Heaven send I may find it so!

Caveat. I warrant you.—Neighbour Item, you have the materials,—let us begin.—But first it may be proper that these parties quit the room.

Luc. O, I cannot leave my dear master!

Sav. Nay, Lucetta, my uncle must determine for us both.

Mart. O, gentlemen, I am under great obligations to them; and as they are pretty well apprised of my intentions, their retiring will be unnecessary.

Cav. We shall proceed then immediately. The common preamble, *In the name* and so forth, we may suppose—now, Sir, to the substance of the business,—

Mart. After the discharge of my debts, which I desire may be paid forthwith.

Sav. Dear Sir, those are but small I am sure, and not worth the mention.

Mart. Nay, I owe to Bob Mixum, at the Sun Tavern, above fifty pounds for wine.—

Cav. Very well, Sir;—have you a desire to be interred at any particular place.

Mart. No, no;—I have but one injunction to lay on that particular;—which is, that I may be buried at as little an expence as possible.

Luc. Ah! my dear master retains his prudence to the last.

Cav. Well, Sir, please to let us know what legacies are to be set forth in your will.

Mart. I shall, I shall,—euh—euh—After payment of a few trifles, which I shall mention presently, I make my worthy and valued nephew, my sole heir and executor.—

Sav. Heart-rending generosity!

Mart. Leaving to his use, all my estates real and personal; goods, chattels, money, &c. wholly cutting off every other relation or dependent, their relations or dependants; their children legitimate or mine illegitimate, now in being, or that may be by me begot and produced as mine, before or after my decease.

Sav. If any such should appear, heaven forbid but that I should remember your generosity, and let them be, in some measure, partakers.—

Mart. Item, I give and bequeath to my faithful servant, Lucetta Sharp, here present—

Luc. Oh!

Mart. Who has attended me with great care—on condition she marries Martin Sly, and not otherwise.—

Luc. Eh! how!

Mart. Mark this, my dear Charles!—I say as a reward for her attention and zeal—

Luc. Oh! shall I lose so good a master!

Mart. One thousand pounds sterling.—

Luc. Heaven reward you, dear Sir! 'tis too much! too much! your kindness so overwhelms me,

me, I shall never live to enjoy it. The dear soul always said I should be well remembered.

Sav. (Aside.) O, the rascal! this is a spice of his old trade which I was not prepared for.—Well, Sir, I fancy this is the whole of your instructions.

Mart. No, no, I have two or three more words to say.—Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Martin Sly—

Sav. The scoundrel is making a will with a witness. *(Aside.)*

Mart. Whether he marries the said Lucetta or not—for his good and faithful services to me and his master—

Sav. Services! why, dear Sir, you are conscious there is not a more worthless fellow—

Mart. O nephew, you don't know his merits so well as I do. I say, in consideration of his good qualities, exerted in favour of me and mine, I bequeath him two hundred pounds per annum during his natural life, to be secured to him in what manner he, after my decease, shall choose.—

Sav. O, the dog! *(Aside.)*

Mart. What is the matter, nephew? is it not enough think you?

Sav. Enough! Sir, in my opinion, it is by far too much, and that he ought to think himself more than paid with a small part of it.—

Mart. No, the full two hundred a year—this article neglected, I declare the whole will null and void.—

Sav. But, dear uncle, to a footman; a fellow that you know—

Mart. Another word, Charles, and I make it a thousand.

Sav. The villain won't leave me a penny if he goes on. (*Aside.*)

Luc. Dear Sir, do not oppose my good master. You know his obstinate disposition; a hasty word from you may overturn what he has done for us all.

Sav. I must curb my anger for the present. (*Aside.*)

Caveat. Any thing more, Sir?

Mart. No, I have done.

Sav. (*Aside.*) Heaven be praised!—

Caveat. Well, Sir, these instructions my brother Item and I will take into another room; they shall be drawn out in proper form, and we will return as soon as possible, and put the finishing stroke to our business. Gentlemen, your most obedient.

[*Exit Caveat, Item and Lucetta.*]

Mart. So!—that's over; and I think I have play'd my part tolerably well.

Sav. Too well for me. Pray, tell me, Sir!—you must have lost your wits or all sense of shame. How could you think of giving Lucetta such a sum? a thousand pounds!

Mart. The poor girl should be made easy, Sir. I could not in conscience leave her less.

Sav. Conscience!—it was to ease that very conscience too, rascal, that you gave yourself the moderate reward of two hundred a year.—

Mart. I am sorry you are displeased, Sir. But we can set it all to rights. The will is not yet executed. When the proctors return you may dismiss them—or let me execute it, and afterwards put it in the fire, and let matters stand as your good uncle left them.

Sav. (*Aside.*) The arch rascal has me secure on every side. Well, Martin, I've done!—you shall

shall have your annuity; but you must deserve it by some further assiduity in the affair: I cannot leave the house, and as it will be some time before the proctors can finish their business, you must, to answer present occasions, put yourself in statu quo; then send the boy to Mrs. Watchly. Let him tell her and my dear Myra I am impatient to see them, and beg they will pay me a visit here. He must say, my uncle is confined to his room, so they will run no hazard of seeing him.

Mart. No sooner said than done, Sir.—I fly.

[*Exit.*

Sav. After all, I cannot reconcile myself to the having been a party in executing this deception; 'tis true my uncle promised to leave all to me, in preference to every other relation. But tho' he had an undoubted right so to give it, I have by no means a privilege thus to take it—I will, however, so far make use of the fraud, as to blind Mrs. Watchly; and when Myra and I are settled, I make no doubt of gaining her pardon for the deceit, and liberty to make satisfaction to all parties.—

Enter LUCETTA, and throws herself on the couch.

Luc. O, unhappy me!—O heaven!—what have I seen? what will become of me—oh—oh—undone!—oh—oh!—

Sav. What's the matter, Lucetta? tell me!

Luc. Oh!—I can't—I'm choak'd—but—but—

Sav. But what, Lucetta.

Luc. Oh! I have seen!—

Sav. What the devil have you seen?

Luc.

Luc. Worse than the devil.—Your uncle, Sir, alive and on his legs.—

Sav. How, Lucetta!

Luc. Oh, too fatally true. After placing the proctors at the table in the parlour, and supplying them with necessaries for the work, I was going up the back stairs to my own apartment the garret, when, bless my eyes! what should I see but your uncle. A scream testified my surprize, and my immediately running from him must have encreased his. I believe he will follow me if he can muster so much strength. (*Linger coughs.*) Oh—he's—coming—

Sav. O, Lucetta, I find myself unable to face him for the present.—Do you keep him in conversation, while I retire to recollect myself, and inform Martin what has happen'd, if I can find him.
[*Exit Saville.*]

Luc. Was there ever any thing so unfortunate! that a scheme so quickly plann'd, so perfectly well executed—but no reflection—for here comes the old gentleman, and I must to business.

Enter LINGER.

Oh, my dear Sir, are you restor'd to us? heav'n be praised! who only can truly know, the sorrow the whole family felt at your late severe stroke and supposed death.

Ling. Eh—what?—death, Lucetta!

Luc. Ay, Sir, you was dead to all appearance; witness the sighs and groans of those you left behind! O, the scene of woe, from which your recovery has happily released us.

Ling. Eh—how—dead! astonishing—well—but where's my nephew?

Luc.

Luc. Oh, Sir!

Ling. What's oh Sir? he is not dead too, is he?

Luc. Truly, Sir, I would not swear the contrary, for he was no sooner convinced, as he thought, of your death, but he ran and threw himself—

Ling. Threw himself! what,—out of the window?—

Luc. No, Sir, on the bed; where he has remained bath'd in tears; we have not prevailed on him to eat or drink.—But, Sir, I'll go and inform him of your recovery, and make him as happy as you have made me.—O dear, O dear, O dear!

[*Exit.*

Ling. According to this girl's account, mine has been a surprizing recovery—if I may so call it in my present state. I find myself extremely weak still—I can hardly bear the light—my head swims—I have a mist before my eyes—I'm strangely vapour'd—and—in short I am convinced I must have been a long time in this same lethargy.

Enter LUCETTA with SAVILLE.

Luc. Now, Sir, will you believe me?

Sav. Unexpected happiness! Oh, my dear uncle! has Heaven then, in pity to my grief, restored you to me once more?

Luc. O, Sir, could I but describe how tenderly he loves you! O, had you seen his tears, and heard his sighs, his sobs, his groans—But to say the truth, there was not one of the family who did not sympathize with him.

Ling. I believe it, Lucetta. Charles, thou art a good lad; and one of my greatest comforts is, that I shall now have time and power to make
such

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such a will as will reward thy tendernefs.—*Apropos*, here come the proctors.—

Sav. (*Aside*) The devil they do !

Enter CAVEAT and ITEM.

Ling. Welcome, Gentlemen—I have been expecting you a long time—But—better late than never.

Caveat. A long time ! Nay, I think we have been very expeditious—Sir, I am glad to see you so recovered—But I knew it would be so. I told you making your will would give you new spirits, and now you find the effects of my prescription.—

Ling. Your prescription ! Pray when did you tell me so ?

Caveat. When we were last in this room : when we took your instructions.

Ling. Instructions ! what instructions ? What paper is that ?

Ling. Your will ; which we come to put the finishing stroke to.

Ling. What ! have I made my will ?

Caveat. Undoubtedly.

Luc. We shall certainly be discovered—O, how my heart thumps ! (*Aside*)

Sav. I can never stand this : I shall die with confusion. (*Aside*)

Ling. I give instructions ! I make my will !—you are distracted.—

Caveat. Sir, I am afraid you are so. I should be heartily sorry, after this trouble, to find you *non compos mentis*.—But here are the parties who were present ; and here comes that fellow that fetch'd me to you.—

Enter

Enter MARTIN.

(Aside) Eh, alive! O, the devil! what is all this!

Sav. There is no retreat; therefore stand your ground, and let us fight it out. The old gentleman seems confused, and something may perhaps start in our favour.— *(To Martin aside)*

Ling. More and more surprising! And my nephew, say you, present?

Cav. On my credit he was.—

Ling. Speak, nephew, I conjure you.

Sav. Oh, Sir, I am not able! the thoughts of the will rive my very heart.

Ling. Martin, did you fetch these gentlemen? By whose order, pray?

Mart. By your own.

Ling. Hey-day!

Mart. By the same token you was then lying on this couch, and bad me make haste.

Cav. And on the couch we found you.

Ling. This is all very strange. I recollect nothing of it. It must have been in my lethargy—

Mart. Nothing more likely.

Ling. It was certainly so.—But let me know how my will stands.

Cav. Willingly—*(reads)*—In the name, and so forth—“ I Humphry Linger, of the parish of—

Ling. Well, well, never mind the unnecessary jargon, but come to particulars.—

Cav. So be it—Listen then—“ After paying all “ my just debts—

Ling. Debts! I don't owe a shilling.

E

Cav.

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Cav. O, yes ; fifty pounds, you know, to Bob Mixum at the Sun.

Ling. I owe him fifty pounds ! I never had an accompt with him in my life.—

Mart. No, Sir ! why you bad me call on him in my way to these gentlemen, and order him to write it out.

Ling. This must have been in my lethargy—go on—

Cav. “ I hereby appoint my well beloved nephew Charles Saville, my whole and sole executor—

Ling. Eh ! that's just as I intended. I am half inclined to think I was in my senses after all.

Cav. “ Leaving to his use, after payment of certain legacies herein after-mentioned, all my estates real and personal, goods, chattels, money, &c.—wholly excluding from benefit thereof all other relations or dependents, their relations or dependents, their children legitimate, or mine illegitimate, now in being, or—

Ling. Illegitimate ! illegitimate ! what I have bastard children ?

Mart. Ay, Sir, that must have been in your lethargy.

Cav. “ I give and bequeath to my faithful servant Lucetta Sharp—

Luc. Good creature !

Cav. “ On condition she marries Martin Sly, and not otherwise—

Ling. How's this !

Cav. “ One thousand pounds sterling.—

Luc. Dear Sir, how shall I acknowledge—Believe me, Sir—my gratitude—that—in case—all that—if—speak Martin, for my heart's too full.

Ling.

Ling. A thousand pounds—will you persuade me I could be guilty of such a folly?—

Mart. Why not, Sir?—In your lethargy.

Ling. Let me hear the rest of this wonderful testament.—

Cav. “*Item*, I give and bequeath unto the said “Martin Sly—

Ling. To Martin!

Cav. “Whether he marries the said Lucetta “Sharp, or not—

Mart. O, the confederate good man!

Cav. “For his good and faithful services to “me and his master—

Ling. Services to me!

Cav. “Two hundred pounds *per annum* during “his natural life—

Mart. On my knees, Sir, let me thank you! Heaven only knows how often and fervently I prayed for you, when I thought you dead, and how much I rejoice to find you restored to us.

Ling. How, Mr. Caveat! Two hundred a year? Why this could not—

Mart. No, as you say, Sir, this could not be in your lethargy.—

Ling. Lethargy or no lethargy, I am glad the will was not executed. I desire, Mr. Caveat, it may be immediately burnt. I would not have such a testimony of my folly in being. Two hundred a year!—O burn it, burn it.

Mart. Burn it, mercy forbid, Sir! Destroy all my hopes at once! Consider how kind providence has been in restoring you, and don't begin your new life in an ill humour.

Ling. Dear Charles, there is nothing convinces me of the reality of this will, but my having taken

notice of thee in it; nor indeed is there any thing which prevents my confirming it, but the sums mentioned to be left to thy injury in favour of these two—who, however deserving—

Sav. (*Aside*) His tender concern for me deprives me of the power of carrying on the deceit.—Pray, Gentlemen, (*to the Proctors*) for a moment leave the room; I have something to give vent to, or my heart will burst.—

Car. O, by all means.

Luc. Lucetta, let the Gentlemen have some toast and sack in the next room.—

Luc. I don't like his looks.

[*Exit Lucetta and Proctors.*]

Mart. If he peaches we are all undone.

Sav. (*Kneeling*) I cannot longer deceive so kind and affectionate an uncle—Will you forgive me?

Ling. What is the matter, nephew? you kill me with apprehension.

Mart. Pray heaven he do! that you may not hear what is coming.

Sav. The will is all a falshood and deceit.

Mart. Wough!—

Ling. How!—

Sav. We have deceived both you and the lawyers. This fellow, mischievous and selfish, taking the advantage of your supposed death, took upon him to counterfeit you, and dictated that wicked absurd will which you have heard.

Ling. I am in a cold sweat!

Mart. And I in a colder!

Sav. My offences are greater than his—for I, who ought to have had feeling and honour to forbid the deceit, hurry'd on by the Devil, interest, and that passion Love (for Myra's charms had bewitched

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bewitched me) gave way to the temptation, and now stand before you, with the most keen, contrite feeling of my offence, but without the least hope of your forgiveness.—

Ling. But you shall have hope; for I do, and will forgive thee. 'Twas my abominable preposterous love that drove thee to despair.—I see, I confess, my errors, and will atone for them immediately. Call Lucetta, call the proctors, call every body.—

Mart. Lucetta! Proctors! Every body.—

Ling. (*Falling back in his chair.*) O dear! this rapture will overpower me.

Enter LUCETTA and Proctors.

Ling. O, Mr. Caveat, I am too full of joy to talk about my will now—But send me a blank licence; come to me in the evening, and I will satisfy you all.—
[*Exit Proctors.*

Nephew, run this moment to Mrs. Watchly and her daughter Myra; bring them to me directly!—Lucetta! do you and Martin get all the assistance you can, and procure me a wedding feast in a hurry. If I don't see you married, nephew, before I die, I shan't die in peace; and that I may die in peace, I must see you wedded and bedded directly. Ah Martin, you have been a great rogue to be sure, but I forgive you, I'm in a humour now to forgive every body.

Sav. Indeed, Sir, it is more than he deserves; but after the indulgence shewn to me, I think I must forgive him.

Mart. Forgive me! is that all?—so the best of my situation is likely to be that of wearing this

livery during pleasure;—a vile exchange for two hundred a year and my wife's portion!—I am now oblig'd to return to the comb and the cloath brush—tho' tis hardly a minute ago that my head was full of nothing but lands, tenements and provision for younger children,—however I ought not to complain, 'tis a proper punishment for my eager desire of growing rich too soon;—but—courage! give me thy hand, Lucetta!—I am not yet afraid to follow my master in matrimony; and will henceforward endeavour to imitate him in every virtue.

We see in him integrity rewarded,
While scheming Martin's very near discarded:
In future plans contracted be our views,
The proverb says—who covet all—all lose.



T H E E N D .

